

Tavistock Rural District

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

Medical Officer of Health

FOR

YEAR ENDED 31st DECEMBER, 1950

PUBLIC HEALTH STAFF

Medical Officer of Health :

E. D. ALLEN-PRICE, M.D., D.P.H.

Surveyor and Chief Sanitary Inspector :

L. J. SHEPHERD, C.R.S.I., Cert. of Meat and Foods,
R.S.I., M.S.I.A.

Additional Sanitary Inspector :


T. PYKE, C.R.S.I., Cert. of Meat and Foods, R.S.I.

Housing and Welfare Officer :

Captain A. SANDERSON, A.I.Hsg., A.P.C.A.

M.O.H's. Secretary :

Miss M. J. BODDY.



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Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen,

I beg to submit my annual report on the health and sanitary circumstances of your district for the year ended 31st December, 1950.

No major epidemic occurred during the year but the infectious diseases were somewhat more prevalent and more widely spread than in the previous year. No case of infantile paralysis occurred although the disease was reported from all the contiguous authorities.

The population of the district continues to rise slowly, but it will be seen from the accompanying table that the deaths exceeded the births. The rise therefore is not a natural increase but due rather to migration from the urbanised area to the south of your area.

There was no change in the external boundary of your district but an important internal adjustment was made by the formation of the civil parish of Horrabridge. Previously Horrabridge was merely a geographical location and consisted of parts of the parishes of Whitchurch, Sampford Spiney, Buckland Monachorum and Walkhampton — an administrative anachronism. The benefit of the change is already evident from the keenness of the members of the newly formed Parish Council, who do not hesitate to call upon the services of your officers in their zeal for progress.

SECTION A.

GENERAL STATISTICS

Area (in acres)	...	...	...	...	151,616
Population — 1931 Census	...	...	...	...	15,149
Estimated Home Population — Mid 1950					15,630
Parishes	...	...	...	...	24
Number of Inhabited Houses			...	...	4,563
Rateable Value	...	...	...	...	£96,043
Product of Penny Rate	...	...	...	...	£385
Loan Debt	...	...	...	...	£257,171

VITAL STATISTICS

				Male	Female	Total
Live Births	...	...	...	109	109	218
Legitimate	...	...	...	105	105	
Illegitimate	...	...	...	4	4	
						England & Wales
Crude Birth Rate per 1,000 population					13.9	15.8
Corrected Birth Rate	...	...	...		15.7	
Still Births	...	...	...		3	
Still Birth Rate per						
1,000 live and still births	...	...	...		13.6	0.37

	Male	Female	Total
Deaths	121	117	238
			England & Wales
Crude Death Rate per 1,000 population		15.2	11.6
Corrected Death Rate		12.3	
Deaths from Maternal Causes		Nil	
Maternal Mortality		—	0.86
Deaths of Infants under 1 year		3	
Infant Mortality		13.8	29.8

The chief causes of death were:—

INFECTIOUS CAUSES

Pulmonary Tuberculosis	13
Other forms of Tuberculosis	1
Influenza	1
Osteomyelitis	1
Syphilis (General Paralysis Insane)	1

GENERAL CAUSES

Cerebral Vascular Disease	66
Cancer	40
Heart Disease	35
Pneumonia	14
Arteriosclerosis	9
Bronchitis	8
Nephritis	7
Senility	7
Disease of the Prostate	5
Diabetes	3
Asthma	2
Gastric Ulcer	2
Accidental	8
Suicide	4
Other Causes	8

INFANTS UNDER 1 YEAR

Prematurity	3
	—
Total ...	238

AGE OF DEATH TABLE					Male	Female
Age at Death						
Infants under 1 year					3	—
1 - 5 years					2	—
5 - 15					—	—
15 - 25					—	2
25 - 35					2	1
35 - 45					4	6
45 - 55					9	6
55 - 65					19	14
65 - 75					30	27
75 and Over					52	61
					—	—
					121	117

SECTION B.

GENERAL PROVISIONS OF THE HEALTH SERVICES

There was no change in the health services during the year, and it is regrettable to have to report that no maternity accommodation has yet been provided although the premises are immediately available.

The vicissitudes of the National Health Service appear to be settling and the chief trouble for the future appears to be one of economics. However, it is becoming apparent that having the medical services divided into three watertight compartments is not likely to give the best results and a feeling is becoming general that some integrating machinery is needed.

SECTION C.

SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE AREA

Water Supply

The table at the end of this report sets out in detail the arrangements on a parochial basis.

The North Devon Water Board has now taken over the duties of water suppliers to the northern parishes of your district, and it will be seen from the accompanying table that many samples for analysis have been taken with generally good results:—

	Number of Samples			
	taken by N.D.W.B.	Good	Fair	Bad
Bacteriological Examination of Water	83	58	14	11

It is to be hoped that as the Board's mains extend a pure and copious supply of water will be available to all. I would point out here that the Council are still the responsible

Authority for the administration of the Public Health and Water Acts in respect of those sections dealing with water, apart from the Board's actual possessions.

As the year was, on the whole, a wet one, there was no undue alarm and water supplies held out very well generally. Even so, there was cause for alarm in June when the Water Board had to raise water for Brentor by means of the auxiliary pump which was recently installed by the Council, and water had to be carted to the Bere Alston School for the sanitary conveniences, this being the only means open to your Medical Officer to prevent the school being closed.

The temporary well at Woolacombe, which was sunk at the spot recommended by Professor Jones of Cambridge, yielded exceptionally well during the drought period. The result of the analysis was very satisfactory and the supply was harnessed and proved of extreme value.

A new reservoir of 20,000 gallons capacity was built at Bere Ferrers between June and October, which should prove a boon during drought periods.

Eight additional hydrants were fixed at Bere Alston to give cover in accordance with the requirements of the N.F.S.

Bursts in the water mains occurred early in the year at Mary Tavy and later at Horrabridge, and were dealt with speedily and effectively.

A Ministry Inquiry was held at Lamerton on 30th August in connection with the proposed water and sewerage schemes, both of which were subsequently approved by the Minister. It is advocated that all possible measures be taken to implement the schemes as soon as possible.

32 samples of water were taken during the year and in every instance the result was satisfactory.

Drainage and Sewerage

No new sewage works were commenced during the year but considerable progress was made in schemes for further sewerage, particularly in the villages of Chillaton, Lamerton and Milton Coombe, and plans were submitted to the Ministry.

The proposed new Dousland sewerage scheme, which is really an amalgamation of two residential areas with a common outfall, proceeded and was passed by the Ministry, and has recently been the subject of an Inquiry. It is hoped that work on this scheme will commence in the near future, and not only abolish present nuisance from faulty septic tanks, but in all probability will give rise to future development in this residential area.

The Council's sewage disposal works in the district received regular supervision and maintenance during the year. Maintenance, in this respect, becomes more and more difficult owing to the increasing number of works, especially the smaller ones to the new Council House Estates in the areas where there is no main drainage, and it is inevitable that when the proposed schemes are carried out further manual staff will be imperative.

Under the supervision of your Surveyor a new sewer was laid at Walkhampton which proved very satisfactory and has abated the nuisance from the overflowing manhole in the village.

SANITARY INSPECTION OF THE DISTRICT

It will be seen from the accompanying table of inspections, etc., that the work of the Sanitary Inspectors is very onerous :

Visits to Council Houses	983
Nuisances investigated and dealt with	426
Water Supplies — new and repaired	131
Visits in connection with water supplies	476
Water samples submitted	32
Premises disinfected	18
Premises disinfested	3
Tests for new and re-laid drains	112
Visits re building licences	63
Visits re buildings in course of construction	397
Number of plans submitted	195
Visits in connection therewith	202
New septic tank installations	32
Visits re Petroleum Licences	10
Visits re Sewerage and Sewage Disposal	296
Visits re Rodent Control	86
Miscellaneous visits	283

Refuse Collection

This essential service proved to be very controversial and although there were several Sub-Committee meetings to endeavour to carry out the recommendations of your Medical Officer for a direct labour collection, the absence of suitable tips proved a major obstacle and collection continued by contract.

Complaints from areas where there is no collection were numerous and in some cases very bitter.

It is again very strongly urged that the only way to give satisfaction is by a direct labour collection covering the whole of the District.

Factories Acts, 1937 and 1948

1. *Inspections.*

<i>Premises</i> (1)	<i>Number on Register</i> (2)	<i>Number of</i>		
		<i>Inspec- tions</i> (3)	<i>Written Notices</i> (4)	<i>Occu- piers Prose- cuted</i> (5)
(i) Factories in which Sections 1, 2, 3, 4, and 6 are to be enforced by Local Authorities	11	42	2	Nil
(ii) Factories not included in (i) in which Section 7 is enforced by the Local Authority	40	92	1	Nil
(iii) Other Premises	8	16	Nil	Nil
TOTAL ...	59	150	3	Nil

2. Cases in which Defects were found.

Particulars (1)	Number of cases in which Defects were found				Number of cases in which prose- cutions were insti- tuted (6)
	Found (2)	Reme- died (3)	Referred To H.M. Inspec- tor (4)	By H.M. Inspec- tor (5)	
Want of Cleanliness	6	6	—	—	—
Overcrowding ...	—	—	—	—	—
Unreasonable Temperature ...	—	—	—	—	—
Inadequate Ventilation ...	5	5	—	—	—
Ineffective drainage of floors ...	4	4	—	—	—
Sanitary Conveniences :					
(a) Insufficient ...	—	—	—	—	—
(b) Unsuitable or defective ...	3	3	—	—	—
(c) Not separate for sexes ...	—	—	—	—	—
TOTAL ...	18	18	Nil	Nil	Nil

Weather

As a matter of particular interest to farmers the Meteorological Report from the Tavistock Observatory is included. The report applies generally to the district with the exception of the Princetown region which has climatic conditions peculiar to itself.

Height above sea level—457 feet in Stevenson Screen.

Latitude—50.33 N; Longitude—4.10 W.

The total amount of rain was 57.54 ins.

The total number of rainy days was 226.

The average amount of rain is 47.6 ins.

The greatest fall was 42.1 m.m. (1.6 ins.) on 20th August.

RAINFALL FOR 1950					
Month		Total Depth in inches	Greatest fall in 24 hours (m.m.)	Date	Number of Rainy Days
January	...	1.87	12.5	15th	14
February	...	7.04	24.9	2nd	22
March	...	3.16	14.9	16th	12
April	...	3.34	16.8	17th	21
May	...	1.97	13.0	24th	11
June	...	2.61	23.7	20th	14
July	...	5.37	27.3	15th	20
August	...	8.54	42.1	20th	22
September	...	7.69	27.6	8th	27
October	...	2.16	9.5	13th	18
November	...	8.82	34.3	27th	23
December	...	4.97	16.2	9th	22
		57.54			226

SECTION D.

HOUSING

The Council resolved that the premises of applicants for new council houses should be inspected by the Sanitary Department in order that advice was available as to the housing conditions of the applicants, and the desirability of preventing future occupation of those premises which were unfit for human habitation. As a result of this several landlords were compelled to carry out extensive repairs whilst 3 separate properties and a block of 7 cottages were represented to the Council under Section 154 of the Housing Act, 1936.

It is hoped by these means to gradually improve the housing standards of the District and also to prevent these unfit properties being re-occupied by people who propose to

use this environment as a delicate lever to obtain a Council house over the heads of people longer on the waiting list.

Repairs to Council houses during the year were extensive and heavy, several of the older Council houses need major repairs. It is gratifying to record that a commencement was made on the wiring of all Council houses without electricity, a much needed want in these modern days.

The temporary dwellings at Crapstone continued to give every satisfaction but, as before, maintenance for the weather-proofing proved heavy.

Applications for improvement grants were received under the new Housing Act. It is unfortunate that under the provisions of the Act, with every application approved, a burden is added to the local rate.

The prevalence of movable dwellings throughout the district caused grave concern especially as many were used as permanent dwellings owing to the housing shortage and in some cases living conditions were appalling. Consequently the whole of the district was surveyed and a large schedule of moveable dwellings was forwarded to the County Planning Authority with a request that enforcement action for the removal of these dwellings be taken forthwith.

COUNCIL HOUSES — 1951 PROGRAMME

Owing to the comparatively poor progress with the actual erection of houses during 1949, chiefly due to extreme difficulties in the acquisition of sites, the Ministry of Health made no allocation to the Council for either Council houses or those erected by private enterprise. The 8 houses allocated for 1950 were scheduled for Bere Alston.

The structural work for 1950 showed a marked improvement over 1949—in all 40 houses were completed and occupied, namely 20 at Bere Alston, 6 at Peter Tavy, 6 at Walkhampton, 4 at Horrabridge, and 2 each at Princetown and Lydford.

1951 PROGRAMME CARRIED FORWARD FROM 1950 (in course of construction)

Parish		Village	No. of Houses to be built	Site Number
Bere Ferrers	...	Bere Ferrers	... 6	O.S.126
Horrabridge	...	Horrabridge	... 6	O.S.206
Mary Tavy	...	Mary Tavy	... 6	O.S.508 & 508a
Meavy	...	Meavy	... 4	O.S.129
Walkhampton	...	Walkhampton	... 14	O.S.1174

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REMAINDER OF PROGRAMME CARRIED FORWARD

Bere Ferrers	...	Bere Alston	...	10	O.S.1325
Coryton	...	Coryton	...	4	O.S.230
Lamerton	...	Lamerton	...	18	O.S.434 & 435
Milton Abbot	...	Chillaton	...	8	O.S.1002
		Milton Abbot	...	8	O.S.493
Stowford	...	Stowford	...	4	O.S.426

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COUNCIL HOUSES IN THE TAVISTOCK RURAL DISTRICT, 1950

Parish		Village	No. of Houses	Total No. in Parish
Bere Ferrers	...	Bere Alston	...	70
		Bere Ferrers	...	4
				74
Bradstone	...	—	—	—
Brentor	...	Brentor	...	14
Buckland Monachorum		Buckland		
		Monachorum	14	
		Yelverton	...	4
				18
Coryton	...	—	—	—
Dunterton	...	—	—	—
Horrabridge	...	Horrabridge	...	42
Kelly	...	Kelly	...	2
Lamerton	...	Lamerton	...	10
Lewtrenchard	...	—	—	—
Lifton	...	Lifton	...	34
Lydford	...	Lydford	...	10
		Princetown	...	20
				30
Marystowe	...	Near Lewdown	...	4
Mary Tavy	...	Mary Tavy	...	14
Meavy	...	Meavy	...	4
Milton Abbot	...	Chillaton	...	8
Peter Tavy	...	Peter Tavy	...	14
Sampford Spiney	...	Sampford Spiney	...	4
Sheepstor	...	—	—	—
Stowford	...	—	—	—
Sydenham Damarel	...	—	—	—
Tavistock Hamlets	...	—	—	—
Thrushelton	...	Lobhill	...	2
Walkhampton	...	Walkhampton	...	22
Whitchurch	...	Grenofen	...	8
				8
				—
				304
				—

Grand Total ... 304

SECTION E.

INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF FOOD

There were increased visits paid by your Medical Officer and Sanitary Inspectors in connection with the supervision and inspection of foodstuffs. Again particular attention was paid to hygiene and it is pleasing to record that the standard of cleanliness is remarkably good.

Milk

During the year 46 samples of ungraded milk were taken by your Sanitary Inspector and 44 passed the test. Two repeat samples were taken of the two failures and these proved satisfactory.

Ice Cream

42 premises are registered under Section 14 of the Food & Drugs Act, 1938, for the manufacture, sale or storage of ice-cream. The majority of licences issued are for the sale of pre-packed ice-cream, there being only three cases where ice-cream is manufactured on the premises. 16 samples of ice-cream were taken during the year, 13 of which were satisfactory and 3 fair.

Meat

The meat supply continued to come from the Town Abattoir and was duly inspected there.

By permission of the Urban Council the following table of inspections is submitted :—

Carcases Inspected and Condemned

	<i>Cattle excluding Cows</i>	<i>Cows</i>	<i>Calves</i>	<i>Sheep and Lambs</i>	<i>Pigs</i>
Number killed ...	1717	1102	2370	7598	516
Number inspected	1717	1102	2370	7598	516
<i>All diseases except Tuberculosis</i>					
Whole carcasses condemned ...	15	73	88	118	7
Carcases of which some part or organ was condemned ...	867	664	22	1813	51
Percentage of the number inspected affected with disease other than Tuber- culosis ...	51.36%	66.88%	4.64%	25.41%	11.22%
<i>Tuberculosis only</i>					
Whole carcasses condemned ...	11	46	8	—	5
Carcases of which some part or organ was con- demned ...	67	199	—	—	27
Percentage of the number in- spected affected with Tuber- culosis ...	4.54%	22.23%	.34%	—	6.2%

Food Poisoning

One case of food poisoning was notified during the year and attributable to herrings.

Other Foodstuffs

Numerous visits were paid to shops and in view of the increased demand for canned goods, owing to the rationing

difficulties, these were carefully examined but the amount condemned is again surprisingly low as will be seen from the table below. This appears to be due to the stricter supervision and consequent improvement of the actual processing coupled with quicker sales.

3 tins Full Cream Milk ...	...	...	5 lbs.
12 tins Evaporated Milk	...	...	12 lbs.
1 tin Beans	...	...	2 lbs.
1 tin Fruit ...	...	...	2 lbs.
Cheese	...	...	15 lbs.
Butter (badly tainted) ...	...	...	1 lb.
Liquid Egg (tinned, frozen)	...	...	28 lbs.
English Beef (bone taint)	...	...	87 lbs.
Pudding Mixture ...	...	...	3 lbs.
Shortbread Mixture	...	...	1 lb.
Potato Powder	...	...	6 lbs. 9 ozs.

SECTION F.

PREVALENCE OF AND CONTROL OVER INFECTIOUS DISEASE

The following cases of infectious disease were notified by medical practitioners during the year :—

Measles	...	...	...	...	64
Whooping Cough	...	...	...	...	21
Scarlet Fever	...	...	...	...	5
Pneumonia	...	...	...	...	2
Food Poisoning	...	...	...	...	1
Meningococcal Infection	...	...	...	...	1

The following cases of infectious disease were notified during the year from the schools in the district :—

Chicken Pox	...	...	...	...	27
Whooping Cough	...	...	...	...	25
Measles	...	...	...	...	23
Lice	...	...	...	...	16
Mumps	...	...	...	...	5
Ringworm	...	...	...	...	4
Scarlet Fever	...	...	...	...	4
Conjunctivitis	...	...	...	...	3
German Measles	...	...	...	...	2

Once again the district was fortunate in not being visited by any epidemic of infectious disease.

Diphtheria : No case of diphtheria was notified during the year. I am still of opinion that immunisation would be more efficiently organised on a local basis, particularly as there is evidence of a falling off in the number of children being treated.

Tuberculosis : Six new cases of Pulmonary Tuberculosis and 2 new cases of non-pulmonary tuberculosis were notified during the year. 13 deaths were recorded from the former cause and 1 from the latter.

At the end of the year 91 cases of tuberculosis remained on the register as follows :—

Pulmonary				Non-Pulmonary			
Males	...	...	43	Males	...	...	8
Females		...	38	Females		...	2

In conclusion I would thank the Chairman and Council for the ready hearing I have received at all times.

I am, Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

E. D. ALLEN-PRICE,

Medical Officer of Health.

TAVISTOCK RURAL DISTRICT WATER SUPPLIES

PARISH	Whether the water supply of the area and its several parts has been satisfactory (a) in quality (b) in quantity.	Where there is a piped supply, whether bacteriological examinations were made of the raw water and, where treatment is installed, of the water going into supply; if so, how many and the results obtained; the results of any chemical analyses.	Where the waters are liable to have plumbo-solvent action, the facts as to contamination by lead, including precautions taken and number and result of analyses.	Action in respect of any form of contamination.	Particulars of the number of dwelling-houses and the number of the population supplied from public water mains — (a) direct to the houses, (b) by means of stand pipes.
BERE FERRERS	Engineer's report re quantity (a) Yes (b) Inadequate	Piped Supply. No Treatment. Analysis Satis.	With regard to this question, all the moorland waters are plumbo-solvent, and many of the well waters also, however, no case of lead poisoning has been reported or discovered for a number of years.	Routine.	Population ... 1852 (a) Piped Supply 1100 (b) Stand Pipe 80
BRADSTONE	(a) Yes Wells only (b) Inadequate	No piped supply. Private Wells only.		None.	Population ... 140 No Public Supply.
BRENTOR	Aux. pump inst'd (a) Yes (b) Inadequate	Piped Supply. No Treatment. Analysis Satis.		Covered Reservoir and fenced.	Population ... 478 (a) ... 170 (b) ... 48
BUCKLAND MONACHORUM	(a) Yes (b) Yes	Piped supply. Part T.R.D.C. Part Plymouth C.B. Analyses made by Plymouth.		Fencing covered Reservoirs.	Population ... 3150 (a) ... 2654 (b) ... 40
CORYTON	(a) Yes (b) Reas. good	Wells only. No public piped supply.	„	None.	Population ... 125
DUNTERTON	(a) Yes (b) No	Private Wells only. No piped supply.	„	None.	Population ... 140
KELLY	(a) Yes (b) No	Wells only. No piped supply.	„	None.	Population ... 135
LAMERTON	(a) Yes (b) Inadequate	Running Shute Wells. Samples Satis.	„	Much work to improve supply.	Population ... 597 (a) ... Nil (b) Pumps ... 160 Shute ...
LEW TRENCHARD	(a) Yes (b) Inadequate	No piped supply. Wells only. 1 Public.	„	None.	Population ... 188
LIFTON	(a) Yes (b) Inadequate	Piped Supply. No Treatment. Sample Satis.	„	Covered Reservoir and Fencing.	Population ... 919 (a) ... 414 (b) ... Nil
LYDFORD	(a) Yes (b) Pressure poor	Piped Supply. Limestone Chippings for Lydford. Chlorination for Princetown. Samples Satis.	„	Covered Reservoir and Fencing.	Population: Lydford Forest 1206 (a) ... 420 (b) ... 120 Lydford Town 312 (a) ... 150 (b) ... 50
MARYSTOWE	(a) Yes (b) Reas. good	No piped supply.	„	Covered Reservoir.	Population ... 172
MARY TAVY	(a) Yes (b) Inadequate	Piped Supply. Limestone Chippings Tank. Sample Satis.	„	None.	Population ... 707 (a) ... 270 (b) ... 160
MEAVY	(a) Yes (b) Yes	Piped Supply. Plymouth C.B. Samples by Plymouth C.B.	„	None.	Population ... 404 (a) ... 300 (b) ... Nil
MILTON ABBOT	(a) Yes (b) Reas. good	Piped supply to Chillaton. Private supply (Duke of Bedford) at Milton Abbot. Sample Satis.	„	Reservoir Fenced and Covered.	Population ... 724 (a) ... 380 (b) ... 150
PETER TAVY	(a) Yes (b) Reas. good	Piped Supply.	„	Reservoir Fenced and Covered.	Population ... 338 (a) ... 160 (b) ... 64
SAMPFORD SPINEY	(a) Yes (b) Yes	Piped Supply. Samples Satis.	„	Reservoir Fenced and Covered.	Population ... 320 (a) ... 275 (b) ... Nil
SHEEPSTOR	(a) Yes (b) Inadequate	Wells.	„	None.	Population ... 74
STOWFORD	(a) Yes (b) Inadequate	Wells only.	„	None.	Population ... 289
SYDENHAM DAMAREL	(a) Yes (b) Yes	Private supply. (Duke of Bedford). Public Well.	„	None.	Population ... 205 (a) ... 70 (b) ... 70
TAVISTOCK HAMLETS	(a) Yes (b) Inadequate	Wells. and Private Supply. (Duke of Bedford).	„	None.	Population ... 838 (a) ... 444 (b) ... 126
THRUSHELTON	(a) Yes (b) Yes	Wells only.	„	None.	Population ... 259
WALKHAMPTON	(a) Yes (b) Yes	Piped Supply. Sample Satis.	„	None.	Population ... 603 (a) ... 350 (b) ... Nil
WHITCHURCH	(a) Yes (b) Yes	Piped supply and wells.	„	None.	Population ... 718 (a) ... 358 (b) ... Nil

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